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## THE LATEST PHASE OF THE CONTROVERSY OVER BABYLON AND THE BIBLE

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The controversy over Babylon and the Bible so far has passed through three principal stages. It began with the attack which Delitzsch made upon the superiority of the Old Testament in his first lecture. While finding much to praise in the cuneiform literature, he assigned to the Old Hebrew writings a subordinate place. He commended, for instance, the Babylonian representation of creation in the following words:

Here follows a splendid scene: After he has fastened on East and South, North and West, a gigantic net, in order that nothing escape from *Tiāmat*, the god Marduk, in glittering armor and enveloped with majestic splendor, mounts his chariot drawn by four fiery steeds, gazed upon in wonder by the gods round about.<sup>1</sup>

His audience must unconsciously have received the impression that the cuneiform creation epos contained the all-important conception of the world's beginning. But what was lacking? A comparison of the biblical text, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," with the Babylonian text. If the lecturer had only cited

<sup>1</sup> *Babel und Bibel*, Vol. I, p. 33.

even the first eight lines of the Babylonian epos! Then his hearers or readers would have become acquainted with the following:

When the heavens above were not yet named,  
 The firmament (the earth) below not called,  
 Apsû (the ocean) the very First, who begat them,  
 [And] Tiâmat, the archetype, which caused them all to be born,  
 Their waters mingled themselves together . . . ,  
*When of the gods* (not one) *had as yet come into being*,  
 Had named no name, [had sealed] no fate,  
 Then *the gods were fashioned*,  
 Then [for the first time] Lachmu and Lachâmu, etc., came into being.<sup>2</sup>

If only these lines, even, had been given to the hearers or the readers of the lecture, then they would have been able to see for themselves that the Babylonians and Assyrians not only worshiped many gods, but also conceived of them as having come into existence only in the general world-process. Hearers or readers could then have themselves at once drawn the inference: The Babylonian conception of God by no means attained to the Old Testament God-idea, which is that of a divine spiritual being, existing before matter, who by sovereign impulse brings to realization a world-plan conceived by himself. It was especially such incompleteness of comparison between the Babylonian and Old Hebrew literature which characterized the first stage of the Babylon-Bible debate. This imperfection of the method of Delitzsch and others is made clear in detail in my last contribution to this discussion.<sup>3</sup>

The second stage of the campaign had as its most noteworthy element a violent onslaught against the center of the Old Testament, that is to say, the plan of salvation as revealed by God through the prophets. With reference to this Delitzsch had the courage to say:

This national-particularistic monotheism, which, though naturally it does not appear in such passages as the creation narrative, yet undeniably runs everywhere else through the whole Old Testament, from Sinai (Exod. 20:2) to Deutero-Isaiah's word, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, *my* people!" and as far as Zech. 8:23—this monotheism . . . it is difficult to hold as "revealed" by a holy and righteous God—and yet from our childhood up we have all been so hypnotized

<sup>2</sup> P. Jensen, in *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, Vol. VI, Part 1, pp. 2 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Babel-Bibel-Frage und die wissenschaftliche Methode*. Gross-Lichterfelde, Berlin: Edwin Runge. M. o. 70.

by this dogma of the "sole citizenship of Israel" (Eph. 2:12) that we view the history of the old world in a totally distorted perspective.<sup>4</sup>

But what a misconception of man's guilt and the grace of God lies in such a charge against the Old Testament and against the whole Bible. Or does he think no account needs to be taken of the fact that men by impiety to their thousand-fold Benefactor could fall into guilt? Will he also deny him, who guides the world's history, the right to form according to his own wisdom the plan by which to call back to him the nations that are going astray from him? Neither of these questions can be answered in the affirmative, and therefore Delitzsch was not able to take the ground of Abraham Kuenen, who said: "Of the faith that God's hand is in all history, no one shall rob us."<sup>5</sup> Nor can a father who for a season allows a wayward child to seek its happiness in its own way be charged with taking no interest in the history of this child. No, such a father follows the fortunes of this child also with anxious solicitude, always ready to interpose for the good of the child, frequently indirectly, through good friends here and there, giving it some assistance, at any rate always holding out his hand to save it from sinking down in the gulf of perdition and opening the way for a possibly desired return to the father's house. Thus also may the heavenly Father embrace in his providence the nations which he "suffered to walk in their own ways." And with reference to the history of most of his children he has done and is still doing much more than this. Through nature he teaches the toiler of the field (Isa. 28:26). Through the heavens he declares his glory (Ps. 19:1). He was, therefore, and still is, an "educator of nations and teacher of men" (Ps. 94:10). Even to them he has not left himself without witness, etc. (Acts 14:16f; Rom. 1:19 f; 2:14-16). But still, was not Israel preferred? No, not even that can be asserted. For in its history the law of the balance of rights and obligations has been confirmed with remarkable precision. For it the dictum, "Mighty ones shall be mightily chastised,"<sup>6</sup> has proved fully true, and to it the basic principle, "To whom-

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> *De Godsdienst van Israël*, Vol. II, pp. 358 f.: "Het geloof aan God in de geschiedenis laten wij ons niet ontnemen."

<sup>6</sup> Wisd. 6:7, *Δυνατοὶ δυνατῶς ἐτασθήσονται*.

soever much is given, of him shall much be required,"<sup>7</sup> has been rigorously applied. Rejoicing over the real alliance with the living God has often been drowned in Israel under lamentations over the frequent dissolution of this union incurred by man's guilt and the consequences which had then to be decreed by a righteous God. Finally, also the statement of Delitzsch that the history of the ancient world, if conceived in the light of Old Testament prophecy, is brought under a totally perverted point of view, is entirely devoid of truth. For even to ordinary common sense prophecy's perspective of the future appears as a very ideal point of view, since, according to it, *all* human endeavor has for its final goal the turning toward the temple-hill of the Eternal One (Isa. 2:2-4 and Mic. 4:1-3), the participation in the revelation of the living God (Zech. 8:23), and the extending of the circle of his worshipers at last from the rising to the setting of the sun (Mal. 1:11).

A theory very similar to that of Delitzsch has been advanced quite recently by A. Jeremias. The statement that the descendants of Abraham are to inherit salvation he declares to be of "later origin" and a "fatal dogma."<sup>8</sup> But this conclusion is refuted by the following reasons: (a) Even if only what I have lately gathered with reference to the trustworthiness of Israel's historical sense<sup>9</sup> is taken into consideration, it would be impossible to charge this people with having filled the fair pages of its annals with the products of its own phantasy. (b) Again, the above-mentioned basic principle of the Old Testament cannot be called a "dogma;" for by that we mean a product of human speculation, and the prophets, whose discourses are preserved in the Old Testament, protest so loudly against the idea that they are speaking from their own hearts, i. e., out of their own thought-processes, that the evolution of this so-called later religious dogma may not be imputed to them. (c) A. Jeremias calls this dogma a "fatal" one, because it led to "particularism." Nevertheless, it did not do this with proper representatives of the Old Testament principle. For already in the basic passage of

<sup>7</sup> Luke 12:48. Cf. also Rom. 2:12 and Matt. 19:30, "Many that are first shall be last."

<sup>8</sup> *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orient*, p. 225.

<sup>9</sup> *Glaubwürdigkeitsspuren des Alten Testaments*. Gross-Lichterfelde, Berlin: Edwin Runge, 1903. M. 0.75.

Abraham's call we read: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" and with this agree not only the passages already cited, Isa. 2:2-4, etc; but Deutero-Isaiah has in addition to the words quoted by A. Jeremias<sup>10</sup> also such as these: "I have made thee for a light to the gentiles" (Isa. 49:6); or, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56:7). And even he, with whom Old Testament prophecy, having fulfilled its mission, became silent, said as the interpreter of his God: "Great is my name among the gentiles" (Mal. 1:11). Consequently, it is not in harmony with historical truth that the basic principle of the Old Testament concerning Abraham's religious position should be called off-hand a "fatal dogma leading to particularism." And whom, pray, did this sentiment mislead into particularistic ways of thinking? It misled narrow-minded men who thought they might make bold to circumscribe the broad view of the religious plan of the prophets. One part of this plan, viz., that the true seed of Abraham was to be developed into a nursery of true religion and morality (Isa. 5:1-7), they held fast; but the other part, viz., that finally Israel was to become the center of a kingdom of God coextensive with all mankind, they suppressed. (d) Or was, perchance, the Old Testament statement concerning the important relation, religiously, of Abraham to Israel a "fatal doctrine," because the "preaching of John the Baptist and that of Jesus vigorously opposed it," as Jeremias adds? By no means. True, John warned the Pharisees and Sadducees, who approached him, not to rest the hope of salvation upon their Abrahamic descent (Matt. 3:9), because God could "of these stones raise up children to Abraham." In this, however, John meant only to condemn a false exploitation of this hope. Only those were to be startled who thought it safe to mix this hope with religious indifference and immorality. But the hope itself was not thereby declared ungodly. (e) And this would not have been the case, even, if Christ had treated the goal of the spread of true religion without any reference to Abraham; for the history of true religion shows stages of development, and Christ not only perfected the demands of the old covenant (Matt. 5:17)—i. e., spiritualized it, made it a matter of the inner life—but he also transfigured many phases of prophecy. For one thing,

<sup>10</sup> Isa. 51:2, "*For when he was but one, I called him.*"

he, as a matter of fact, completely freed the messianic kingdom from its earthly and worldly limitations (John 18:36). But it is not even true that Christ determined the scope of the redemption founded upon his death without any reference to Abraham's religious significance. When, in spirit, he sees the followers of the Roman centurion who distinguished himself by the abundance of his faith, he says that they shall sit at table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (Matt. 8:11). And he speaks also of the children to whom the bread of the gospel must first be offered (Matt. 15:26), and declares: "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22).

Consequently, neither through Christ's expressions is the basic principle of the Old Testament in regard to Abraham's significance for the history of religion characterized as a "fatal doctrine," nor could the violent onslaught made against the prophetic center of the Old Testament in the second stage of the *Babel-Bibel* discussion break through that center.

The third stage of this debate is to be designated as the pan-Babylonistic stage. For this latest phase the way was already prepared by such sentences as Delitzsch's exclamation: "How altogether similar is everything in Babylon and the Bible."<sup>11</sup> It was hinted at also in words like Winckler's declaration: "The contemplation of the old Orient as one great unit [!] in the matter of civilization compels us to estimate also the intellectual movements which exhibited themselves in this realm from the point of view of the oneness of this sphere of civilization."<sup>12</sup> However, this latest phase of the controversy has been brought into the full light of day only through Otto Weber. He says, in the book cited below,<sup>13</sup> that the battle is only now beginning, and gives as its watchword the declaration: "Babylon and the Bible are emanations of a unitary world-concept;" words which he pronounces in the name of H. Winckler. At another place he formulates the program of his party as follows: "Babylon and the Bible are radiations from one common center of civilization, different indeed in their development and final form, but still clearly fruits of the same field."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 16 (in later editions, p. 18.)

<sup>12</sup> H. Winckler, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (1903), p. 208.

<sup>13</sup> *Theologie und Assyriologie im Streite um Babel und Bibel* (1904), pp. 5 ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

With this program in hand he proposes the formal "incorporation" of Jerusalem with Babylon. Comparing the Old Hebrew civilization to a little hamlet and the Babylonian to a great city, he remarks:

Those who are in authority in the metropolis [meaning thereby the group of Assyriologists to which he counts himself] declare that the little hamlet without has Babylon's ways, Babylon's civilization, and is what it is only through Babylon, and that therefore they are about to extend their laws of government and conduct of life also to this organic part of their domain; here also exceptional laws are no longer to obtain.<sup>15</sup>

As a further reason for this proposal of incorporation he adds also this:

Canaan was at all times a province of the Babylonian realm of civilization. So Israel is and will remain what it always has been, viz., not an island behind a Chinese wall that has passed its existence untouched by the external world, but rather an open land into which Babylonianism found its way, as everywhere else, in the old Orient.<sup>16</sup>

This proposal of "incorporation" is subscribed to by Weber—according to his express statement—because he desires to advocate the fundamental view of H. Winckler. With this harmonizes the above-mentioned exclamation of Delitzsch: "How very similar is everything in Babylon and the Bible!" And A. Jeremias, too, joins this side, in so far as the alleged infection of the Old Hebrew literature with Babylonian astral-mythological conceptions is concerned.<sup>17</sup>

I have no desire to set over against this group the whole list of scholars who, in their publications, have not expressed the view that the civilization of Babylon and Israel is of the same kind. The names of Jules Oppert,<sup>18</sup> P. Keil,<sup>19</sup> C. F. Lehmann,<sup>20</sup> F. Hommel,<sup>21</sup> C. Bezold,<sup>22</sup> H. V. Hilprecht,<sup>23</sup> and, last but not least, P. Haupt, would here naturally come first. For even the last-named scholar has come to this final conclusion: "There will always remain a fundamental difference between Babylon and the Bible, which

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10 f.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orient* (1904), pp. 234, etc.

<sup>18</sup> *Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung* (1903), pp. 303 ff.

<sup>19</sup> *Zur Babel- und Bibelfrage* (1903).

<sup>20</sup> *Babyloniens Kulturmission einst und jetzt* (2d ed., 1905).

<sup>21</sup> *Die altorientalischen Denkmäler und das Alte Testament* (1903), 2d ed.

<sup>22</sup> *Die babylonisch-assyrischen Keilschriften in ihrer Bedeutung für das Alte Testament* (1904).

<sup>23</sup> *Die Ausgrabungen des Bel-Tempel zu Nippur* (1903), pp. 72 ff.



cannot be eliminated by the results of critical research.”<sup>24</sup> This list can easily be completed by the names of all those authors who in decisive points have acknowledged the difference between the Babylonian and Hebrew civilization, as is shown in my little book *Die Babel-Bibel-Frage und die wissenschaftliche Methode*. But, in any case, I am not going to content myself with merely opposing a list of names to the advocate of this proposition. I intend rather also to investigate the proposal itself independently.

Weber presupposes, as we have seen from his words above cited, that somebody has conceived of Israel's civilization as lying “behind a Chinese wall untouched by the world.” But who can this somebody be? Or has he chosen this characterization of the opposing point of view simply for a dark foil in order to put his own conception into stronger light? I at least could name no one, that in our days has written in favor of the Old Testament, whose point of view could thus be fitly described. Even H. H. Kuyper, of Amsterdam, in his inaugural discourse on “Evolutie of Revelatie” (autumn, 1903), has acknowledged both the height and the far-reaching influence of the Babylonian civilization (pp. 30, 33). And with what readiness have I myself given credit to the fact that the original Babylonian home of Abraham contributed a large share to the warp and woof of Israelitish civilization in regard to language, poetic forms, weights and measures, and money, and even to parts of its cult and ancient traditions.<sup>25</sup>

But how are we to escape the fact that the comparison of the Babylonian and Old Hebrew civilization has also brought to light a series of differences? Here let us have some proofs.

It has been affirmed, to be sure, that the pre-Israelitic land of Canaan was already “completely under the domination of Babylonian civilization.”<sup>26</sup> But I pointed out at once that the Canaanite-Phœnicians did not have the same month-names as the Babylonians and Assyrians, and, further, that while the pre-exilic month-names of the Hebrews agree with those of the Phœnician inscriptions, suddenly there appear in Hebrew literature, after the Babylonian

<sup>24</sup> *Johns Hopkins University Circulars* (Baltimore, June, 1903), p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> For this see my book, *Bibel und Babel*, 10th ed., pp. 20-23.

<sup>26</sup> Delitzsch, *Babel und Bibel*, Vol. I, p. 28.

exile, the same month-names which later were customary with the Babylonians. Similarly, in pre-exilic times the Hebrews began the new year in autumn, but after the exile, like the Babylonians, in the spring. Further, the Hebrews had the week of seven days, while "hitherto at least it has been impossible to prove for Babylon a seven-day week in this form."<sup>27</sup> There was "a unit of five days in place of the seven-day week."<sup>28</sup> As the language of the Canaanite-Phœnicians is different from Babylonian and Hebrew, so also is their writing. Among Phœnicians, Moabites (on the Mesa stone), and Hebrews (in the Siloam inscription, etc.) the direction of writing is from right to left; but Babylonian and Assyrian writing, on the contrary, runs from left to right. Next, from a most recent find by Theo. Pinches,<sup>29</sup> it now appears that the sabbath, or rest-day, of the Hebrews, running through the entire year, has a counterpart among the Babylonians and Assyrians only in so far that the fifteenth day of each month is designated by the term *šapattu*, the meaning of which, however, is not yet established, and on this day commercial transactions undoubtedly took place, such as, for instance, the drawing up and signing of contracts.

It is true, the Old Hebrew people were more or less attached to theories of divination—a thing by no means denied in its historical records; but while the spiritual élite of the Israelitish nation despised it, in Babylon, with its representatives and apparatus, divination was an official institution and regarded as the expression of the correct world-theory. Especially striking in this connection is this fact: Among the Babylonians and Assyrians astrology played the chief rôle in divination, but for the Israelites astrology is not even mentioned in the oldest sources among the forbidden forms of divination.<sup>30</sup> Only later, when, with the rise of the Babylonian world-power, intercourse between Israel and Babylon became closer, we hear warnings like these: "The way of (other) nations shall ye not learn and at the signs

<sup>27</sup> H. Zimmern, *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (1903), p. 594.

<sup>28</sup> H. Winckler, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

<sup>29</sup> *Proceedings of the Society for Biblical Archaeology*, Vol. XXVI, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> The verb עִנָּן at most signifies only the observations of עִנָּן, i. e., the configurations and colorings of the clouds. Hub. Grimme conjectures, with little probability, that this verb designated some sort of jinn-magic (*Unbewiesenes im Babel-Bibel-Streite* [1903], p. 79).

(i. e., striking phenomena) of the heavens shall ye not be dismayed, since (only) the (other) nations are dismayed at them" (Jer. 10:2). Again, just as Israel's leading spirits were above astrology—not to mention star-worship—so were they above the idea that Deity may be represented through images. They rendered homage, without the mediation of the senses, to the spiritual principle from which the universe of visible phenomena received the beginning of its impulses and the plan of its evolution. "Behold, before him the nations are as a drop of a bucket;" "Wherein will ye give to the fulness of power an adequate likeness?" (Isa. 40:15, 18).

The religious cult and the political system of the Hebrews further show these additional peculiarities: Avoidance of honey in sacrifice (Lev. 2:11), which was a common votive offering of the Babylonians and of other peoples;<sup>31</sup> a special list of clean and unclean animals or conditions (Lev., chap. 11, etc.); circumcision of the eight-day-old boys (Gen. 17:12),<sup>32</sup> which among the Arabians was put off till much later, was a law for the priests only among the Egyptians,<sup>33</sup> and did not exist at all among the Babylonians and Assyrians; and, lastly, a peculiar conception of the earthly king as the mere representative of the heavenly king Yahweh (Exod. 15:18, "Yahweh shall be king;" Judg. 8:23, "Yahweh shall rule over you;" 1 Sam. 8:5, etc.).

Now, is not this already a considerable series of factors proving the uniqueness of the Hebrew civilization? That is the state of affairs even before we come to the realm of religious and moral concepts, wherein this civilization found its central sphere. Must now our estimate concerning Israel's place in the history of civilization in Asia Minor be changed if we consider this sphere? Let a few examples decide the question.

First, to devote a few words to the prophets whose discourses are contained in the Old Testament. They had so clear a consciousness of their unique relation to the sphere of the divine that they were bold to distinguish themselves, not only from the diviners and disciples

<sup>31</sup> P. Haupt, in Toy's *Commentary on Ezek.* 16:19.

<sup>32</sup> This distinction has been neglected by Delitzsch in *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Rich. Reitzenstein, *Zwei religionsgeschichtliche Fragen* (1901), p. 45: "Dr. Fouquet tells me that up to this time he has never yet seen a circumcised mummy of a non-priest."

of the prophets (Am. 7:14), but even from other men who opposed them in the name of Yahweh (as Chananja in Jer., chap. 28). They had only one Lord, "before whom they stood," as Elijah the Tishbite (1 Kings 17:1), and they suffered themselves to be cast into prison, as did a certain Micaiah, the son of Imlah (1 Kings 22:6 ff), rather than deny the message that was given to them. It is true, Winckler takes the liberty of calling Amos a "political agent" and Jeremiah a "politician."<sup>34</sup> But it will be hard to come to a conclusion that more completely disregards the testimony of the sources. He has confused the prophets of Israel's true religion with those other prophets that were in the service of the king (1 Kings 22:6 ff., etc.), and whom the people called "their prophets" (Isa. 29:14). Winckler thereupon co-ordinates Jeremiah and men of like stamp (Jer. 7:25) with the Assyrian prophets. But the Assyrian to whom he points us for an example<sup>35</sup> speaks, for instance, these lines: "I, the servant, the prophet of the king, his lord (*bi-li-šū*), give utterance to these prophecies for the king my lord. The gods, whose names I have recited, shall receive (!) and hear for the king, my lord, these prophecies,"<sup>36</sup> etc. What a contrast to the words of the prophets of Israel's legitimate religion! They live and die for the certainty of their consciousness that they stand before (i. e., in the service of) the heavenly King, Yahweh. And where, then, are the Babylonian-Assyrian parallels to the prophetic books of the Old Testament, with their exalted religious and moral contents? Are they found, perhaps, in the collection of *omina*, of which especially two have been discovered in the library at Kuyunjik? One of these, for example, contains the words: "If in the month Elûl (about September) the winds blow from the first to the thirtieth day, there will be rain-floods and high water."<sup>37</sup> Behold there thy rival, O book of Isaiah! It is on this account that we hear even from a representative of the "advanced criticism," like T. K. Cheyne, the following judgment passed upon the prophets of the Old Testament:

This at least we may say without fear of contradiction, that a succession of men so absorbed in "the living God," and at the same time so intensely practical

<sup>34</sup> *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. I, pp. 91, 95, and *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (1903), pp. 170 f.

<sup>35</sup> *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, p. 171, note.

<sup>36</sup> *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin* (1898), pp. 257 f.

<sup>37</sup> C. Bezold, *Ninive und Babylon* (1903), pp. 84 f.

in their aims—i. e., so earnestly bent on promoting the highest national interests—cannot be found in antiquity elsewhere than in Israel.<sup>38</sup>

Now let us turn to consider, furthermore, some of the great principles which give to the prophetic religion of the Old Testament its chief characteristics, and to answer the question whether they are the fruits of the religion of Babylon.

The most fundamental of these principles is that of monotheism. Delitzsch also now admits that only in Israel did the monotheistic faith become a national religion.<sup>39</sup> But he has not yet given up his view that the Canaanitish tribes,<sup>40</sup> which settled in Babylon about 2250,<sup>41</sup> and from which afterward sprang Hammurabi himself,<sup>42</sup> had proper names in which monotheism manifests itself.<sup>43</sup> He makes out such a proper name especially in case of *Ilu-amranni*, "O God, look upon me."<sup>44</sup> But he has not taken into account that Hammurabi, and the people from whom he sprang were devoted to polytheism. This is now well known from Hammurabi's code of laws, where in the first three lines he mentions four gods. But those who are notoriously polytheists can use the term *ilu*, "god," only in the sense of "a god," for with the worshipers of many gods, "God," generically, does not exist in addition to them. He, therefore, who gave to his child the name *Ilu-amranni*, "O God, look upon me," called upon that god who in the situation in question occupied the foreground of his interest. This frequently occurs among polytheists, and long ago Max Müller gave to this phase of polytheism the term "henotheism."<sup>45</sup> The old literature of Babylon, accordingly, gives

<sup>45</sup> *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion* (as illustrated by the religions of India). London, 1880.

us no knowledge of any adherents of monotheism, and the assertion, "Beyond the river your fathers served other gods" (Josh. 24:2), has been confirmed. With Abraham began a new stage in the history of religion, and especially as a consequence of the supernatural deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exod. 15:11; 18:11)

<sup>38</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. III (1902), col. 3854.

<sup>39</sup> *Babel und Bibel*, Vol. III, p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> The term "Canaanite" he has, on account of my objection, replaced with "North-Semitic."

<sup>41</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 46.      <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 46; Vol. III, pp. 16 f.      <sup>44</sup> Vol. I, p. 75.

—the swarm of gods and goddesses was so blown to the winds that the Hebrew language does not even possess a term for “goddess.”

Nor did the soil of Babylon afterward produce monotheism. Delitzsch, it is true, asserts that “free and enlightened spirits in Babylon openly taught that Nergal and Nebo, moon-god and sun-god and all other gods, are one in Marduk, the god of light.”<sup>46</sup> In this he has reference to a New Babylonian text in which a series of lines—as, e. g., *il Nergal Marduk ša kablu*—follow each other, and these words signify: the god Nergal is the Marduk of battle (i. e., when the former is viewed as the god of battle).<sup>47</sup> But with this the existence of the god Nergal is not denied. It is only affirmed that all those attributes and functions of the gods, enumerated under each other on the left in the cuneiform lines, are found also in Marduk. In this way Marduk, the city-god of Babylon, was glorified.

Thus neither the earlier nor the later literature of Babylon furnishes evidence that a monotheistic religion was known there. Consequently, here also the proposition to merge the Bible in Babylon<sup>48</sup> proves itself without foundation.

Another main idea of the Old Testament civilization is the unity of the human race—a view which has found expression in manifold ways. How plainly is it brought out in the well-known table of nations (Gen., chap. 10)! But neither must there be overlooked the comprehensive plan of history, embracing all nations, which is sketched, for example, in the words: “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3*b*). Therefore Adalbert Merx has justly said:

The final presupposition of the idea of universal history is the thought of the unity of mankind and of its unitary movement toward an appointed end, which, in each given moment, lies unattained in the future. Both these ideas have their origin in the Old Testament. What has here, before the eighth century B. C., been grasped by the Yahwist of Genesis (2:4*b*, etc.) and the oldest prophets, in the development of Greek thought comes to consciousness and expression

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 49.

<sup>47</sup> The meaning of this New-Babylonian text is explained in the same way by H. Zimmern in *Keilinschriften und Bibel* (1903), p. 34; Johns in the *Expository Times* (1903-4), p. 44 f; C. Bezold in *Die babylonisch-assyrischen Keilinschriften*, etc. (1904), pp. 33 f.

<sup>48</sup> In German, *Bibel in Babel*.—EDITORS.

only shortly before the first Christian century, in the pseudo-Aristotelian writing *Of the World*.<sup>49</sup>

The Hebrews furnished the chronological scaffolding of universal history. The Elohist (Gen. 5:1 ff.) has not simply adopted a Babylonian chronology; he has independently remodeled it to harmonize it with his own concept.

This universalistic conception of human history also is lacking from the Babylonian and Assyrian literature. As the idea of a first human pair is absent (Delitzsch, in deference to my objection,<sup>50</sup> has replaced this statement in the later editions of his *Babel und Bibel*<sup>51</sup> with "the first man"), so neither is there found a counterpart to the table of nations (Gen., chap. 10), though Delitzsch and others have been silent concerning this lack. And does the cuneiform literature perchance possess such a comprehensive perspective as the Old Testament? No. It is neither so comprehensive nor so elevated. For even if everything is taken into account that up to this moment has been adduced either from the myths or from the obscure statement of a cuneiform text<sup>52</sup> as showing a Babylonian-Assyrian forecast of the changes of future history, what, then, is proved? No more than that portions of the old world, outside of Israel, perceived the divine kinship of man and the inclination of the deities to heal sickness, or, in general, to remove evil. But these are "beggarly elements" (*στοιχία πτωχά*) to compare with the rich and noble structure of prophecy, which appears in the Old Hebrew literature. For their perspective of the future has its goal in the restoration of harmony between God and the universal posterity of the woman (Gen. 3:15). And the deepest foundation for the reconciliation of human souls with their God lies, according to the Hebrew hope, in the "treading under foot" of the guilt of mankind (Jer. 31:34b; Ezek. 36:25; Mic. 7:19a).

These, according to my judgment, are sufficient materials with

<sup>49</sup> *Verhandlungen des XIII. Internationalen Orientalistenkongresses* (1904), pp. 195 f.

<sup>50</sup> Compare my *Bibel und Babel*, 10th ed., p. 27, note.

<sup>51</sup> Vol. I, p. 33.

<sup>52</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*, col. 3063: "Sea-coast against sea-coast, Elamite against Elamite, Cassite against Cassite, Kuthæan against Kuthæan, country against country, house against house, man against man. Brother is to show no mercy towards brother; they shall kill one another."

which to prove that the proposition to merge the Bible in Babylon is ungrounded.

But was the little Canaan able to obtain an independent significance in the history of mankind over against the powerful Babylon?

Strange as this question may appear to many, it must nevertheless be asked, because certain authors have recently expressed themselves as if the Israelitish civilization were, as a matter of course, a mere offshoot of Babylonianism. Among other things we read:

The little nation of Israel never played any important part politically. . . . Even for the development of its own civilization the prerequisites are absent. The territory is too small. There are no rivers to serve as the natural highways of commerce. Its natural boundaries separate it to the north from its tribal kinsmen, who are more highly civilized, because dwelling closer to civilization, while Israel, on the contrary, is more exposed to the desert and its nomadic hordes. On the other hand, it does not lie isolated enough to remain untouched by the course of traffic and conquest.<sup>53</sup>

In answer to this it needs only be asked incidentally: Which element of a civilization determines its real height? Does not, for instance, the princess Tamar say rightly, "No such thing ought to be done in Israel" (2 Sam. 13:12)? And did not Isaiah justly utter warnings against the influences from East and West (Isa. 2:6)? But the main question is the following: Is the political and, especially, the cultural importance of a country dependent upon its external extent? How small were the Greek states compared with the Persian empire, and yet they successfully opposed that colossus. Again, has the intellectual influence of the Hellenic peoples been in proportion to their numerical smallness? No, the dwarf in external extent has become a giant in his importance for civilization. Or can the possibility of the independent civilization of Israel be questioned by referring to the example of Switzerland, as does H. Winckler?<sup>54</sup> To this replies Oettli,<sup>55</sup> no doubt with entire justice, that though Switzerland has received "decisive impulses from the great civilized states between which it lies," it in the main has followed its own genius, and in more modern times has even itself imparted impulses

<sup>53</sup> H. Winckler, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> *Abraham als Babylonier*, etc. (1903), p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> *Beweis des Glaubens* (1904), p. 120. Cf. my booklet, *Die Babylonische Gefangenschaft der Bibel als beendet erwiesen* (Stuttgart: Max Rielmann, 1905).



in different directions. And was it not seen in the case of Greece, that, as a conquered land, it gave laws to the victorious Roman Empire? The same may have been the purpose of the Yahweh-people in the moral and religious sphere of civilization. And it has been that.

So also from this external point of view the religious preponderance of the Old Testament cannot be disputed, and therefore it is to be hoped that this latest phase of the Babylon-Bible discussion also be its last, and that the prophetic core of the old Hebrew literature will in the future be acknowledged as a most important leaven in human civilization.